

things under the Clean Water Act do. It was kind of hard to get labs to realize that it was important to use the qualifiers. He stated that he has gone out and told labs to use data qualifiers throughout and then the Drinking Water Program from Tallahassee wrote him back and told him to stop telling labs to use data qualifiers. [Tom Frick interjected "that was for reporting data on the DMR (Discharge Monitoring Report because instead of using the 'U' they use the less than sign. They just didn't want it on the DMR report.")] White further stated that the Drinking Water Program did not understand the data qualifiers so they didn't want them used. White was asked if the program areas that use the data are conscious of the data qualifiers and take them into consideration when they are making decisions. He responded that almost all of the data that we create in-house does not go anywhere else but, our own use. I rarely, rarely do data for someone outside the Department.

White was asked to describe the Port St. Lucie Lab's "Quality System" and the steps taken to evaluate data. His response was, "data is entered into our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) system, and once a project is completed a data verification sheet is printed out, the data is compared to raw data which would be bench sheets, Lab books, print outs from computers to insure that the data matches what's in the computer with what's on the raw data sheets. Once that is completed I sign it off and transfer it to the library and from there it's uploaded to STORET." "Data entry is done by everyone in the Lab and field people."

After certification he added the requirements under NELAP (those came from when they came and inspected the Lab.) White stated that the last inspection was believed to have been in April. When asked if that was a clear inspection, he replied that they always find things. They didn't find anything major, and we had also asked for certification for microbiology which we didn't have before. We now hold certification for general chemistry and we are still waiting for our certificate for microbiology.

White was questioned on the usefulness of data qualifiers and what is the usefulness of data if data qualifiers are not used properly or if they are stripped? "I guess it would depend on the qualifier because there are different qualifiers for different types of data, in other words data qualifiers that are used for microbiology wouldn't apply to data for nutrients. They're fairly specific. I basically was told not to use data qualifiers because there was an understanding that if data qualifiers were used the data would be rejected for use in the TMDL project." He stated he was told that by Greg Graves. He was told this prior to certification, around 2003 or somewhere in there. It would have been when the Lab "ramped up and began doing all of the group 1 through group 5 projects, somewhere about there." He said he had no idea when that was actually started nor could he look at the data and make a determination.

Some data qualifiers were in use, "If something was below detection limits that data qualifier would be there and usually if something was 'past hold' I would use a "J". I would just record it as an estimate, rather than a "Q". That was my discretionary use of a data qualifier."

White could not specify a specific time period when the practice was used but he did state that most of the time he would use a "J" rather than a "Q". White stated that "'past holds' would be the most common data qualifier suppressed by the Port St. Lucie Lab. Another qualifier would be when it (the test) would be between the method detection limit and the practical quantification. Once again it was thought that if you used data qualifiers it basically made the